

## Lou Mansolillo

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**From:** Mary Johndrew <maryjohndrew@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2026 5:16 PM  
**To:** House Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
**Subject:** House Bill 7071

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Chair Bennett, House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

As a concerned resident of Rumford and Master Gardener, I am writing in support of House Bill 7071, sponsored by Rep. Jennifer Boylan and others. This important legislation will prohibit the importation, transportation, disbursement, sale or purchase of any terrestrial species of non-native plants deemed invasive by the Department of Environmental Management. A similar law already exists in Massachusetts.

Why is this important? Invasive non-native species, the majority of which have been introduced by intentional sale and planting, can spread through seed disbursement and other means to unintended locations. Here, they outcompete native plants for sunlight, water and soil nutrients. The loss of native plants in turn negatively affects biodiversity, wildlife habitats and the resilience of the ecosystem. Once established, these invasive plants are difficult to remove and their harm to the ecosystem increases with time.

Many of our state's wild and natural landscapes are marred by the incursion of numerous non-native species. In some ways, the forest is an object lesson on how species purchased in nurseries have "escaped" from suburban landscapes. Species such as Kousa dogwood and Burning Bush are seen throughout the underbrush. Oriental bittersweet, multiflora rose and Japanese Knotweed aggressively crowd out Rhode Island's native plants.

Rhode Island is one of only five states that do not prohibit the sale of invasive plants. In the face of shrinking wildlife habit, climate change, and the precipitous decline in bird and insect populations, prohibiting the sale of invasive plants is a "no brainer." There are over 3000 species of beautiful native plants in the region. These plants are adaptable to the suburban landscape and, given a chance, can outperform and outshine the invasives whose sale we would limit. A simple shift in focus by nurseries to native plants would more than mitigate any loss of income. As a volunteer with the RI Wild Plant Society, I devote 3 hours per week planting and cultivating native species. My efforts also contribute to the success of the ReSeeding RI initiative. But volunteers cannot do this work alone.

I urge the Committee to vote favorably on House Bill 7071.

Thank you.

Mary E. Johndrew

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